

Lloyd announces plans to retire after 2000-2001 season

BY TIM MASMAR
Of the Globe-Gazette

MASON CITY — This year John Lloyd had a different announcement to make at the Mason City Mohawk Hockey Club's annual season-ending banquet.

This time, the Mohawks varsity coach of 17 years announced he would retire from varsity coaching after the 2000-2001 season.

"I've been thinking about it for about a year," said Lloyd, who started coaching hockey in Alaska back in 1969. "It's for a combination of reasons. I have grandsons that play hockey in Minnesota that I want to see play and I want to spend more time with my wife (Barbara)."

Lloyd's announcement came after the Mohawks finished 26-6 during the regular season and 18-4 in the Iowa High School Hockey League. The Mohawks then settled for a 7th place finish at the state

tournament held in Sioux City last weekend.

"We thought we had a really good season this year and the disappointing finish at the state tournament didn't have any bearings on my decision," he said. "Next year should be an even better year and we are excited about hosting the state tournament."



Lloyd

than his relationships with his current players, one of the main reasons for his returning for one more year, is because the Mohawks will host the varsity state tournament next season. This year, the Mohawks hosted the junior varsity state tournament.

"If next year's state tournament was held somewhere else, I probably would have

made my decision effective after this year," he said from the Ice Arena late Tuesday night. "But, I would have given an earlier notice."

Lloyd's professionalism off the ice, as well as his presence on the ice, has taken the Mohawks to new heights in his coaching career.

After the construction of the new arena for the 1983-84 season, Lloyd put together his first championship team in 1987 and followed that with another in 1997. Both teams, along with this past seasons squad, rate with Lloyd among the best teams he's coached as a Mohawk.

"In '87 we had a good, but dominating and intimidating team," said Lloyd, who is 62 years-old. "In '97, we had an outstanding team that didn't play well all the time.

"That team was a No. 6 seed in the state tournament and that is when we finally put

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everything together. They lost some games during the year they probably shouldn't have, but they really came together. This year, we had four solid lines that gave us the best depth we've had in a while."

As for his successor, Lloyd said he nominates assistant coach Bob Springer for the job, although he mentioned there are several qualified candidates within the organization alone.

"Bob would be my recommendation," said Lloyd.

Springer, whose sons Robbie and Jerry played for the Mohawks this year, said the coaching job would be something for him to think about after being 'caught off guard' on Tuesday night.

"It would be something I'm interested in," said Springer, who has been a Mohawk coach

for six years. "There are also several other coaches in the program who are very capable. I guess, I really haven't thought about it all that much yet."

Eventhough he has declared his departure, Lloyd believes that the sport of hockey in North Iowa is thriving.

"I see our program as continuing to go uphill," he said. "Our program is very good right now. We have some good dedicated coaches down in the youth leagues and I am very comfortable that things will continue to be fine."

After next season, Lloyd will continue to work at the arena as the manager.

"I will be very involved in working with the kids," he said. "I love working with the young kids, they are so much fun."